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ABSTRACT

Analysis and assessment of young children's spontaneous writing and drawing in daily journals may focus on three significant dimensions: what, who, and how: what stands for thought and meaning; who, for person; and how, for form. These categories may be further divided. Thought and meaning include theme(s), organization, and vocabulary; person includes the approach or stance of the writer toward the subject, authorship or uniqueness, and authenticity or individuality of the writing; and form includes the interrelationships of writing and drawing, language structure, and mechanics. The teacher can use these dimensions to act as a responsive reader of children's journals, rather than a critic. This three-dimensional view of language development draws attention to the thinking and individuality of the students as well as to the form of their writing, while the inclusion of nonverbal symbols in the journals adds an important data source from which to interpret the expression of the students. The developmental approach affords a framework through which the significance of the data can be revealed. All of the teachers who have used the dimensions and assessment method have reported that this approach has helped them to concentrate on the whole child as reflected in the child's writing and drawing. Samples of children's work are included. (SRT)

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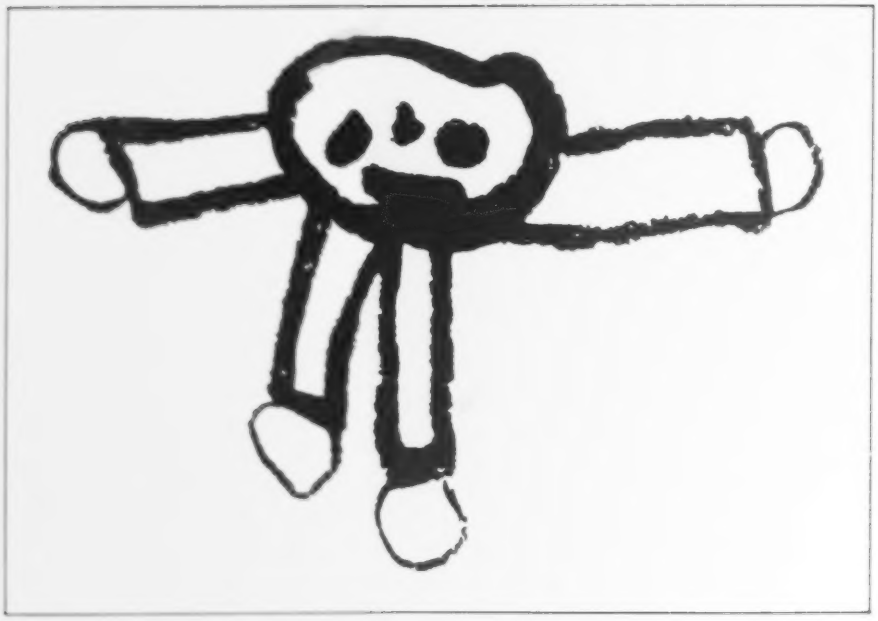

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Amity Buxton

CHILDREN'S JOURNALS: FURTHER DIMENSIONS OF ASSESSING LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

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In November 1972, educators from several parts of the United States met at the University of North Dakota to discuss some common concerns about the narrow accountability ethos that had begun to dominate schools and to share what many believed to be more sensible means of both documenting and assessing children's learning. Subsequent meetings, much sharing of evaluation information, and financial and moral support from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund have all contributed to keeping together what is now called the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation.

A major goal of the Study Group, beyond support for individual participants and programs, is to provide materials for teachers, parents, school administrators and governmental decision-makers (within State Education Agencies and the U.S. Office of Education) that might encourage re-examination of a range of evaluation issues and perspectives about schools and schooling. Towards this end, the Study Group has initiated a continuing series of monographs. In addition to discussions of evaluation, the series includes material on children's thinking, children's language, teacher support systems, inservice training, the school's relationship to the larger community. The intent is that these papers be taken not as final statements but as working papers, written by people who are acting on, not just thinking about, these problems, whose implications need an active and considered response.

Vito Perrone, Dean
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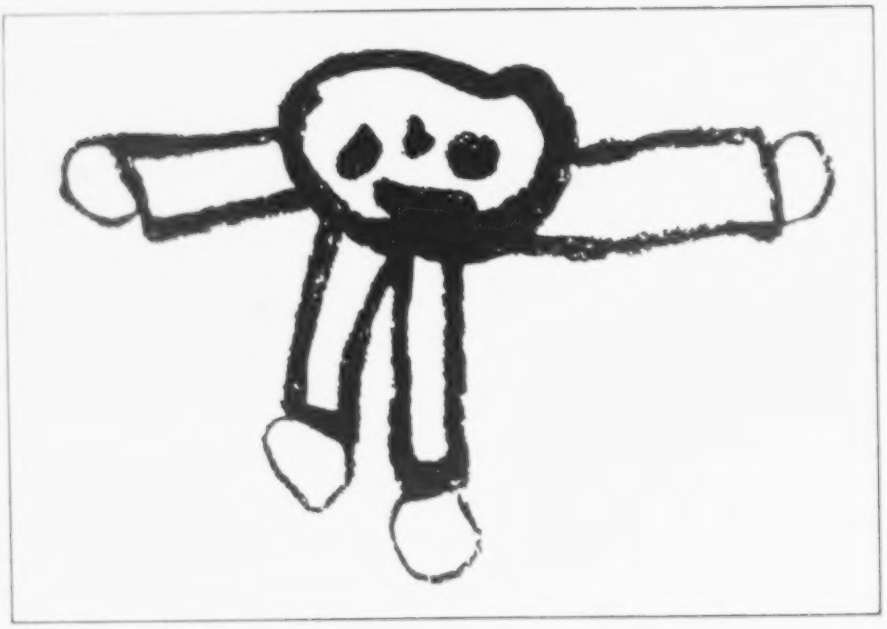
North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation



Amity Buxton

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University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, N.D. 58202
September 1982

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1

Introduction

Thanks go to the following persons for the advice, encouragement, criticism, and collaborative effort which made this research idea become a reality: James Britton, professor *emeritus*, Goldsmith College, University of London; Penelope Buchanan, Greater Cleveland Teacher Center; Joanne Capper, State Department of Education, Sacramento, Cal.; Patricia Carini, Prospect Archive, North Bennington, Vermont; Anne Bussis and Ted Chittenden, Early Childhood Group, Education Testing Service; George Hein, Leslie College, Cambridge, Mass.; Vito Perrone, Center for Teaching and Learning, North Dakota University; Dorothy Petitt, English Department, San Francisco State University; Ian Pringle, Department of Linguistics, Carleton University, Ottawa; Robert Shafer, Department of English, University of Arizona; Beth Alberty and Lillian Weber, Workshop Center for Open Education, City College of New York; and Melba Brown, teacher, Stonehurst School, Stanley Cohen, art specialist, Kathleen Hurty, Teachers' Center staff, Gretchen Johnson, Lockwood School, Mary Lee Luzmoor, teacher, Arts Schools, Jane Sandstrom, teacher, Joaquin Miller School, and Jo Strickland, teacher, Cox School, Oakland Public Schools.

This study presents another way of looking at young children's writing by setting forth dimensions for analyzing and assessing the spontaneous writing (and drawing) in daily journals. The approach is based on the developmental theory which suggests that *basic* language skills show their primary growth at some point during the five- to eight-year-old period, depending upon the individual, his/her environment, and his/her teacher, parent, and peer social group.

The study is based on a particular theory of writing development which embraces the notions that one learns writing by writing and that writing improves developmentally with spurts and plateaus. The study is based also on an alternative research method. The parameters by which to study the writing are derived from the characteristics observed in the writing studied rather than from a priori criteria.

Basically, then, this study of children's writing is an alternative assessment study; that is, it complements existing traditional evaluation and research methods. The *alternative* quality has to do with the *data* being considered, the *process* of the evaluation, and the *method of reporting* the findings. The term *assessment* is used rather than *evaluation* because this alternative approach involves descriptive analysis primarily. The judgement to be made is one of degree of change or consistency in children's writing rather than of *good*, *bad*, *correct*, or *incorrect* elements.

In addition, this is a collaborative research study in that the researchers included practitioners (classroom teachers of children's journal work) who gave practical insight to research questions and to interpretation of the children's work. The teacher collaborators helped to refine the research questions, and they affirmed or challenged the interpretations of the children's journal entries by *readers* who did not know the children or classroom conditions.

VIEW OF LANGUAGE

This approach to the study of children's writing is derived from a particular view of the nature of language and its development. The assumption is that language is not a body of discrete skills to be learned systematically in a predictable sequence and to be measured periodically against predetermined and standardized expectations, but a complex dynamic of cognitive, affective, social, and physical growth which takes place through a person's interaction with people and his/her environment in an organic progression and which can be described as an ongoing two-way pattern (horizontal and vertical) of development. Like cognitive, moral, social, and affective development, the development of writing skills occurs at different rates within different dimensions of writing, not linearly. This view stems from the research in language, thought, and human development conducted by Jean Piaget, Suzanne Langer, Courtney Cazden, James Britton, Connie and Harold Rosen, Joan Tough, Pat Carini, and L. S. Vygotsky.

Language is a symbol system by which an individual makes sense of the world and him/herself, defines his/her thoughts, and expresses his/her individuality. Language develops out of a person's experience and is preceded by thought, while it also serves to clarify, refine, and direct thinking. Language serves three major functions--practical transactions, personal expression, and formal poetry--and it can be used for a number of distinctive strategies in given situations. As a symbol system, language is complemented by nonverbal symbol systems such as found in the arts.

Various questions about children's language have been suggested by research studies: What are the critical aspects of a young child's written language? What features are there to analyze in the writing of five- to eight-year olds so as to understand, facilitate, support, and stimulate their writing better? How does children's language develop in the complexities of structure of function or content in their writing? Do children have individual styles or particular stances (approaches) to topics in their writings? How will children's language develop through a program of continual writing over time? These questions formed the background of our study.

SETTING OF THE RESEARCH

The writing studied was the daily personal journals of children, aged five through eight, enrolled in a newly formed kindergarten-through-third-grade alternative school in Oakland, California, over a three-year period. The school is the primary level component of a total

kindergarten-through-12th-grade [illegible]. The school was initiated by parents who, under the direction of the district Arts consultant, hired the staff, monitored its program, fought for its survival, and volunteered in the classrooms on a regular basis. It was funded by the district, Titles III and IV C funds and, through materials, the Aesthetic Education component of the Central Midwestern Regional Educational Lab.

The school is art-centered; parents choose to have their children attend the school because of their interest in the arts. The space of the setting affords a continuous gallery of the children's work in all media and in all subject areas. Their work is displayed in every nook and cranny of the old building--paintings, clay work, drawings, three-dimensional models. The arts are done as subjects [illegible] or as vehicles for expressing the children's understandings and insights about various [illegible] (e.g. [illegible]). Each year the teachers and principal develop the curriculum around such [illegible] the study of which includes all subject areas and involves expressive projects using not only paint, clay, pencils, and paper but also musical instruments, dance, drama, and poetry. Two instructional aides work with the children and help prepare an exciting, aesthetically pleasing environment. Parents volunteer to use their art skills to help teach; and, for the third year of the research, artists taught alongside the staff in the various subject areas as well as in the arts.

The 60 or 70 children work in multi-age groupings with each of the three teachers for their mathematics, science, reading, and language and for their daily [illegible]--a mixed-age level grouping for the purposes of student interdisciplinary projects and school activities and teacher evaluations for report cards and parent conferences. For study of the subject areas, the children are divided into two groups: the younger (those with beginning skills of reading and language--usually the kindergarteners and first graders) and the older (usually those with the more developed skills--second and third graders). For half the morning, two of the three teachers work with these groups--one in each--in reading and language development. Both groups work with the third teacher in mathematics and science activities for the other half of the morning. The [illegible] work takes place in the afternoon with a different grouping of children: three groups--all ages--divided among three teachers.

The individual conferencing which the teachers conduct with the students of their [illegible] is geared to enable the children to reach their highest achievement levels according to their individual developmental

patterns--irrespective of their grade levels. In the study of each subject area also, the children are taught, guided and *extended* according to their individual abilities, interest, and rates of learning. Some children, for example, took the three years of the study to develop fluent writing skills, while others started off being extremely expressive in their creative activities and only gradually developed economy and emphasis in form.

Each of the two teachers involved in the teaching/learning of reading and language arts skills came to her belief in the power of journal writing through the experience of working with the children in this medium. The journals became tools for the reading program, the student sharing, and the assessment of individual interest and concerns. One of the teachers saw the journals as a key to her understanding of each child's individual way of learning. She taught the older group:

I tend to see the journals as a core to our whole reading. The child has a picture or idea about something that interests him/her. The children tend to write out of their own experience and use them in terms of an idea book, not unrelated to their unique way of learning. The journals have become a very personal type of thing.

The teacher of the younger children valued the power of the journal drawing and words to reveal the meaning which each child wanted to communicate:

I'm very fond of the journals for the very youngest kids. So many of them have experiences that they want to share . . . . Give them a blank piece of paper and the materials to work with and they come up with something that is meaningful to them and then they can tell you about it. You can see what they have then . . . . It may not look like "the five that is destroying the city," but from the thing they have created on that sheet of paper, you can get through and the connection with words to them. I never found anything better.

This particular teacher began her teaching at the high school level and gradually worked with younger and younger children as she saw this power of children's personal interest and experiences to motivate and direct their thinking and understanding.

DATA OF THE RESEARCH

The daily journal entries used in the research include both writing and drawing. Each child is *expected* to write and draw in his/her journal every day. Not all of the children do so on any one day, but eventually it

is the rare child who will not be writing every day. Each child creates a drawing with the writing. Most of them draw first and then write. Those who hesitate to draw (mostly some older children during their first year in school) select a picture from the [illegible], but eventually all of the children both draw and write. When they write, they often talk about their entries with the other children and teachers, parent volunteers, or aides. They read them aloud to themselves and to one another.

For the children who cannot write independently (kindergarten through mid-second), the teachers transcribe exactly what they dictate and the children trace (overwrite) or copy (underwrite) the entries. At the next stage, these children make the letter formations independently themselves as they compose their entries.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA: FOUR PHASES

The research focuses on a stratified random sample of 60 year-long journal entries written and drawn by 30 of the children over a three-year period (1974-1977).

The analysis involves the writing/drawing of 20 children (five from each age/grade level) for each year. Each successive year's data include five new children (the youngest) and exclude five former children (the oldest, who have graduated into fourth grade). Each child studied has a maximum of 18 entries, one from the first and last (short) months of the school year and two from each of the remaining months (October through May). The children were selected on the basis of having the most complete coverage of the year's work and continued enrollment. The writing/drawing samples were selected by random sampling within each month.

With several educators and psychologists helping, the research process entailed continual looking and relooking at the journal entries in relation to all the children across each age/grade level and, more importantly, in relation to the children's writing development over one, two, or three years. For the first phase of our study, we read the journals in order to identify the most salient characteristics of the children's writing (and drawing) which could then aid us in forming key dimensions by which to analyze and assess all the journal entries for the research. Through these dimensions, it was clear by the end of the first reading that each child's 18 samples indicated growth in his/her writing ability in all dimensions to some degree.

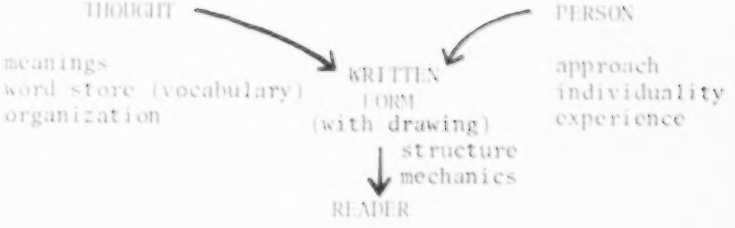
The second phase of the study involved a classroom teacher who includes journal writing in her first-

grade class. We read and noted the salient details of the journal samples for a second time, using the key dimensions which had been formulated. We did not read the samples to find examples of the dimensions, but rather we read and reread the samples to find what features stood out as significant marks of each child's writing and drawing.

We then classified each feature under its appropriate dimension. By following this process, we further defined nine dimensions by adding distinctive features of the children's writing where indicated.

At this point of the study, we determined a tentative listing of the dimensions: rhetorical devices, language structure, author's approach (stance), *author-ship*, theme, relationship of writing and drawing, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics. Whereas mechanics had been the first characteristic which had drawn our attention, it assumed less and less importance as other features of the children's writing drew our attention to more significant dimensions of the writing. Vocabulary, on the other hand, which began as part of the other dimensions, assumed a singular importance during the rereading stage. Vocabulary became a separate dimension as indicating a distinguishing mark of the *stylistics* of individual writers.

For the third phase of the research, the two teachers of the children joined us for analyzing the journals which had been written during the second and third years of the study. As the team read the samples, discussed them, and attempted to delineate patterns in terms of the dimensions, it became apparent that the dimensions themselves clustered around three *basic aspects* of writing: the THOUGHT or meaning; the individuality or PERSON of the writer; and the FORM or structure of the writing (and drawing). In essence, we found that these groupings of the dimensions highlighted the *what*, the *who*, and the *how* of the writing. These three aspects form an integrated relationship in the writing. By looking at the three aspects separately, a teacher-reader increases in understanding, appreciation, and capability to assist the writer to sharpen his/her skills of thinking, expressing, and composing. The three aspects, in effect, impinge upon the reader in one reading experience, as the chart below shows:



The final phase of research involved the collation of the noted features of the children's writing for analysis in respect to the nine dimensions and their interrelationships. This phase also served to assess the development of writing skills in each age/grade level and for each child during his/her period in the school during the three years of the study.

During the phase of rereading the samples, the dimensions were refined still further as the developmental approach revealed the greater and lesser importance of various features over time. Given the basic three aspects of writing (thought, person, and form), the final listing of dimensions includes authenticity--the mark of the individual writer's voice--which began to assume increasing significance as we reread the 1,080 entries. On the other hand, rhetorical devices (internalized literary or media devices) appeared to be less important than we had first thought. They appeared, rather, to be part of language structure in general. The final identification of critical dimensions in young children's writing was the following:

1. Theme(s)
2. Organization
3. Vocabulary

4. Approach or stance of the writer toward the subject
5. Authorship/uniqueness
6. Authenticity/individuality

7. Interrelationships of writing and drawing
8. Language structure
9. Mechanics

INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

The first readings of the children's writings raised several questions and suggested a number of hypotheses about the development of young children's writing and the role of this kind of assessment in that development. We noted, for example, that six-year-olds (first graders) often showed fewer distinctive features in language structure, approach, and authorship than did the younger and older children. Was this because many of them were just beginning to write independently and that that effort took away from the energy necessary for working out their ways of putting their points of view and personal voices on paper? We noted, too, that organization assumed an importance only at the third-

grade (eight-year-old) level. Was this because both writing and thinking abilities had progressed to the point of thinking-on-paper?

Other questions have arisen from research and from classroom practice of these children or other teachers. Major questions which the interpretation of the data addresses include the following:

1. What features of children's writing change over time? How?

2. Does growth of writing ability relate to quantity of work?

3. What does growth in technical skills look like? When does it occur? How?

4. What does growth in thinking skills look like? When does it occur? How?

5. Is there a pattern to the development of separate dimensions or groups of dimensions? Which ones are grouped? Why?

6. What are the key characteristics of thinking, form, or personal expression at breakthrough points in a child's writing development (e.g. tracing to copying the teacher's writing of dictated entries or independent writing)?

Interpretation, therefore, focuses on these questions through the rereading of the children's writings. While it is tempting to analyze frequencies of items and complexities of structure in quantitative form, we have selected a qualitative, descriptive method as more appropriate for reporting the findings of the study: How children learn to write. To this end, we have selected samples of the children's writing which illustrate the nine dimensions of writing and which demonstrate the interrelationships of those dimensions as children develop their writing skills at each age/grade level and over a one- to three-year period. The present report presents these findings. Representative samples of the children's writing appear as the children wrote them, including spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.

DIMENSIONS: CHANGE, CONSISTENCIES, AND INTERRELATIONSHIPS IN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The nine dimensions by which we looked at the children's writing stem from the most salient characteristics of their writing. Once identified, the listed di-

mensions appear as an arbitrary selection. In actuality, all nine dimensions overlap one another. There is as much a part of PERSON as *interpretation of writing and drawing* is a part of THOUGHT/MEANING.

Rather than a checklist by which to sort out parts of the writing into discrete categories, the list of dimensions provides a tool by which to look at writing and see what is there. As one reads the writing and notes distinctive features, the dimensions serve as a lens to determine which aspect of the writing--meaning, individuality, or form--the features primarily serve. The dimensions are a way to analyze and describe the data so that the whole of the writing and writer are better understood. In turn, close attention to the separate aspects in relation to one another and to the whole affords a complex view of the writing--beyond a purely quantified analysis of content and structure.

2

Dimensions for Looking at Children's Writings and Drawings in Daily Journals

THE MEANING (WHAT)

1. *Theme(s):* Predominant or (over time) recurring subjects or attitudes or feelings or ideas or value judgments . . . motifs . . . aspect or subject consistently discussed . . . interrelationships of recurring subjects, etc.

2. *Organization:* A sequence? undigested? selected? dramatic?--time relationships: overlapping? simultaneous events?--logical thinking? association? . . . generalization? classification? comparison? elaboration? hypotheses? cause-effect? a series? ambiguous? clear? coherent? unrelated? undeveloped?

3. *Vocabulary:* Distinctive choice? precise? varied? limited? predominance of one type? (adverb, adjective, color, action word . . . .)

PERSON (WHO)

4. *Approach or stance of the writer toward the audience:* Personal anecdote? a diary? narrative? imagination? expression? (idea? feeling? value judgment? point of view?) speaking to an audience? . . . fantasy? *Purpose?* . . . information? . . . reflection? record of an event? report? storytelling? pointing out? explaining?

5. *Authorship/influences:* Characteristic constellation of patterns of the child's writing? how can you tell he/she wrote it? . . . *Typical* structure? idea? feeling? *style?*

6. *Authenticity/individuality of the writing:* Personal feelings, opinions, perspectives, or ideas which communicate the writer's individuality . . . details which come from personal experience . . . involvement of writer in the subject . . . marks of *sincerity* . . . .

The dimensions are interrelated as the child thinks and writes in his or her journal. The dimensions are isolated here only as analytic tools for a comprehensive view of children's writing and drawing.

7. *Interrelationships of writing and drawing:* What does each express about the subject? . . . how do they relate to each other and to total expression/idea/communication? Does writing relate to picture? Which is more detailed? Which took most energy? Does writing have graphic effect? . . . Do they depend on each other? How do they relate to total page? Which expresses *thought* more clearly? Does writing go beyond picture? What does picture say that words don't?

8. *Language structure:* Complete sentences? simple? compound? complex? varied? Tenses, parts of speech, word order, clauses, subject/verb agreement, etc.; contractions, participles, dummy subject (*it was . . .*)? embedding? ambiguous? clear? active or passive voice? awkward? conversational? Rhetorical devices related to literary forms: *once upon a time*, title, *The End*; conversation; dialogue . . . repetition . . . alliteration; *internalized storytelling*; poetic (word order, phrasing)? devices related to media: journalistic? commercials? comic book dialogue?

9. *Mechanics:* Manual control; underwriting; overwriting, independent handwriting; spelling (and invented spelling); punctuation and signals other than punctuation; unusual use of punctuation (e.g. apostrophes for words other than possessives or contractions); capitalization, upper/lower case confusion.

Using the dimensions in this way to look at the children's writing over a three-year period, we were able to describe a number of general and particular characteristics of writers at each age/grade level. By recording the salient characteristics of each of the entry samples and reviewing the total collection of each child's writing within an age/grade level, we could identify the recurring features which seemed to have significance as a *mark* of the writing at that level. The following analyses present each dimension, at each of the four age/grade levels, with illustrative excerpts copied exactly as written.

ON THOUGHT AND MEANING

Theme(s)

The themes about which the children write include the subjects of their journal entries and the aspects of the subjects which they choose to discuss or draw: their viewpoints, their feelings, ideas, opinions. Those subjects which appear often in a year's work signify a meaningful theme.

Most children wrote again and again on one or more themes, often with variations. The *theme* became less important for the eight- and nine-year-olds for whom organization was the more important aspect of writing. Looked at over one or more years, these *variations on a theme* indicated the particular meanings that an apparently common theme had for each child. Such individualized meanings for themes seemingly common to an age/grade level comprised one of the most important findings of the research.

Among the kindergarteners, the most frequent subjects recurring in the girls' journals are *little girls* and *flowers* (a third of the sample) and, in the boy's journals, *monsters* (a fifth of the sample). Several wrote about fellow pupils. Within these common subjects, however, each child communicated a different "theme." For one girl, the *girl with the flowers* was always *pretty*, her story ended happily, and magic was usually involved. For another, the flowers alone gave the *pretty* and *bright* meaning to her writing. For a third child, the *little girl* was always holding the flowers and other plants were personified:

One upon a time there lived a girl and that girl is nice too the plants.

For a fourth, the *little girl* was involved with not only flowers, but also butterflies, her family, and her house. For a fifth, the garden, the family, and animals were integrated into a sense of *love*.

Now the animals see the little girl. They made friends with the little girl.

Similarly for the boys writing about *monsters*, the monsters had different thematic meanings for each person. For one, the monster was simply part of a general theme of fighting and entrapment. For another, the monsters (and Batman) appeared as creatures who engaged in a number of fighting adventures. For a third, monsters represented *strength* often accompanied by fire.

Some kindergarten writers have no theme.

Recurring subjects of the first graders are similar to those of the kindergarteners: space activities, monsters, and little girls/flowers/animals. Personal experiences, however, seem to have more meaning for them than for the younger children.

The common themes had different meanings for the individual children. The writings about space, for instance, meant speed and power to one; power and fighting to another; racing, destroying, and fighting to a third; a means of locomotion to a fourth; and, along

with creatures, striving toward a goal to a fifth.

The monsters, too, had different meanings to the first graders. The boy interested in power and speed described a monster as *king*. The boy writing about goal-oriented space activities presented monsters as *friendly* creatures. The boy for whom the travel aspect of space was most important wrote about monsters interacting with other real or imagined creatures and a monster *baby*. In other words, monsters can be objectifications of concepts other than fearsome creatures to these children.

The meaning of personal experiences also varied among the writers who wrote consistently about what they had done. One boy reported his own experiences as often as he wrote about his possessions. He also wrote about wishes and hopes. He and his place in the world was the key theme. A girl, however, dwelled on her outings and activities with her family and friends. The social aspect was most important. Another wrote about what she had done, made, or felt.

Girls and flowers also had different meanings for the three writers who often wrote about them. For one, girls, flowers, magic, rainbows, and angels formed a pretty *storybook* view of the world. For the second, *girls* was but one of her *living things* themes which ran through her writing; other living things were cat, snake, tree, and flowers. For the third, *a girl* (or *lady*), sometimes *ugly*, was the subject of many of her journal entries, including her looking at or standing by a rainbow. In each entry, the *girl* was doing different things, and she changed names and dress.

Themes unique to individual children included the fairy-tale world of one writer:

This is a beautiful princess. She has a pretty fan that she lost. The end.

and the family world of another:

My brother's birthday is coming soon. And we are going to make a big cake.

The *second graders* wrote about a variety of topics. No single subject predominated their journals. Personal events were characteristic of over a third, space travel of a fourth, and destruction of a fifth of the sample.

Events in the children's own lives appeared in most journals. Those for whom personal events was a recurrent theme wrote about experiences at home, at school, or in the community. Again, the meaningful aspect of these events differed for each child. For one it was

the meaning of the event. For another it was *What I did*. For a third it was *Where I went*. For a fourth it was what happened. For a fifth, it was *I and my friends and my animals*. For a sixth it was *What I made*.

Space travel had different meanings for the second grade boys who wrote often about it. One described the use of powerful space equipment. One valued space activities as a traveling theme (along with ships, monsters, and cars). Another two dwelled on fights and crashes among spacecraft (and, for one, among armies).

Destruction and violence were treated differently by the three who wrote about them in terms of the overall theme of their journals. For one, destruction meant people's fighting; for another, people's fighting (not liked) and space weapons (liked); and for a third, fighting among fantasy creatures.

One second grader wrote consistently about animals and gardens. Another (who initially did not know what to write about) wrote about death.

Personal experience is the most common theme among the *third graders*. Almost all wrote about some experience in their lives at least once. Like the second graders, they each emphasized different aspects of their personal experiences. One wrote of the experience per se:

I can play low C, D, E, F, F#, G, G#, A, B♭, B, and Middle C. And a almost another octave.

Another, of the fun in the event:

We are going to the Dance Class today and I am going to have fun.

Another, of the personal and social events:

On the weekend, I am going to Calistoga. It is going to be fun. I'm going to meet my cousins. It is always hot. But I don't care.

Another, of her making things:

Today I made a pie and I ate it all up but saved some for . . . [members of her family]

Another, of events:

I cannot find my newspaper book.

Three boys dwelled on some variation of violence, death, and destruction. One wrote of monsters fighting; one, of impending death/destruction to cars or beings; one,

of comic book characters fighting. These same themes are related to the fantasy theme which runs through their writing.

Other boys who wrote about fantastic subjects dwelled on the adventure, the traveling (space), the action (also related to personal experience), the *plot*, or the details.

Two wrote about animals, primarily. One presented them in their fanciful aspect, the other in a humorous vein. In fact, the latter child had a theme of laughter throughout her journal, as she wrote of herself: *Sharon Howard is funny.*

The theme, then, of children's writing goes beyond the immediate subject of one piece of writing. It gains meaning when seen in relation with other writings over time. Through several writings and rereadings, the particular aspect which has meaning for the writer becomes evident. What may seem to be the common second graders's *theme* will be, rather, a composite of diverse meanings, depending on the individual child's thinking about it.

Organization

The most frequently used basis of organization at all age/grade levels, excluding first, is time. The particular sequencing of time, however, differed from age/grade level to age/grade level. Second graders (seven- and eight-year-olds) showed the most change. Third graders (eight- and nine-year-olds) showed the most *organization*.

Kindergarteners organized their writing around a time or space sequence. Between their statements about the past, present, or future, there were a few connections:

Rama played Bingo. Jonae won.

Similarly, they wrote descriptions of what was in their drawings or what they had done with no organizational focus, such as in the labeling in this entry:

This is a car.

Many wrote a narration of events without transitions:

Godzilla is fighting the monster. Godzilla won.

By mid-March, one wrote a transition:

This is the monster. They are fighting. But the bat is trying to stop them.

One uniquely organized his thought around the meaning of the picture, with a statement and exposition:

This is a monster. He is mad at a man.

The more common practice was to present undigested statements:

The plant saw that. Bee was not there. The other one was away.

This general lack of connectedness is part of the developmental growth of five- and six-year-olds.

The first graders more frequently organized their writing in terms of cause/effect in keeping with their cognitive development. About half of them organized their entries either in terms of a time sequence or cause/effect relations.

Several wrote seemingly disconnected statements related only to the drawing, not to each other. One girl always *lettered* in a stream-of-consciousness fashion. Another often made a series of statements which bore no immediate or logical connection with one another:

This house is a pretty one. I like it. Do you? I love you so . . . so I like you if you do.

and

He wants to play. He plays to blowing bubbles.

Those who simply stated what the drawing was described in a sentence a single attribute or event related to the subject, but without much indication of meaningful organization. When all entries on the same subject are analyzed, however, the meaning of the subject to the child becomes evident, as discussed above, under *Theme*.

Second graders showed more changes in organization than any age/grade group in any dimension. These changes (both positive and negative) occurred among children who entered with the ability to write independently and those who started to write on their own during the year. Most organizational changes, however, took place after the child had begun to write independently.

When the children began to write independently, most regressed to earlier patterns of organization (description/explanation or passive action as opposed to narrative action, cause/effect, and time sequence).

This is a leopard and he is hiding in the tall grass.

and

The plant was fighting the plant snake.

Among those who were already writing independently, change occurred in the other direction: from disconnectedness to connected description, narrative, logical opinion:

I like my Mom. She is pretty. and my Mom loves me. My Dad loves Mom. The End.

Several children showed a strong, clear past-present-future time sense. Half of the sample organized their entries according to time sequence. Two wrote of time through implication: *I can't wait*, and *It's been in my family a long time*. One continued to write in an undigested stream of consciousness or sequence of events.

Some children showed clear cognitive patterns in several entries: cause/effect; analysis; labeling; and comparison. One child generalized. Another developed from describing the action or time of the subject to presenting the details of the subject, the process of its working, or its meaning.

Like the kindergarteners and first graders, the third graders often organized their writing in terms of time. In contrast to the younger children, they clarified connections among the events of the time sequence:

remember the monster in the book will have he is. he is very mad because his wife went away. and he is going to cry.

Half of the third graders presented a clear time sequence. In two cases, the time relationship fluctuated between past and present. In three cases, the time sense referred to the past or the future. In one case, the time sequence led to a kind of summary statement about the cause or reason for the event:

This is a colorful explosion! It was made by a atom bomb! It was the only one that would make color.

Several children occasionally thought about reasons and causes. Two organized their writing around an analysis of several points of view.

One child wrote extensively about the details of the subject, but never concluded her remarks with any kind of generalization or explanation:

I drank a can of root Beer last night, and I this morning. Now when I get home I am going to have some more. The end

Another child, while writing shorter entries, showed an unusual logic in his work:

I like outer evolution. I think it is fun. But Sometimes I have to do my responsibilities. The End.

Two children who began the year *listing* statements developed connecting skills by January and April respectively. Three other children focused so singly on the drawing, facts, or their own imagination and involvement in the writing that the organizational aspect was never considered. The more there is to say, apparently, the more there is to organize and the longer it will take to develop organizational skills.

The aspect of organization, viewed in this way as part of the *thinking process* rather than as part of the technical part of composition, indicates that organization is actually *thinking on paper*. As children think about what they are trying to say on paper, they begin to organize their presentations.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary assumed increasingly more importance to the children's writing during the research. Vocabulary used in writing comes from the children's own resources of words, whether or not they are dictating or writing their ideas for themselves. When the teachers were writing down what the children said about their drawings (through kindergarten, and for some through part of second grade), they wrote exactly what the children said, including ungrammatical and non-standard word forms. For the older children, the choice of words became more important as *learners* of the particular meanings the subjects had for the children.

The vocabulary of kindergarten children was usually limited to naming the colors, characters, settings, or activities drawn in their pictures. These words were simple and not unique to any child: *little, pretty girl, baby, blue, orange, sky, house*, and other common words.

A few children selected adjectives which were not simple or characteristic of spoken vocabularies of five/six-year-olds, such as *bright sun* or *golden hat*. These phrases may well have come from their internalization of stories read aloud to them. The child who used these particular phrases began the year with the more simple vocabulary. Her development in writing showed in this vocabulary dimension.

The first graders' vocabulary was somewhat limited also, but it included adjectives denoting the attributes of subjects and verbs describing the actions in their pictures. The words they chose were precise in terms of the details of their drawings: for example, the

eighty pelsons; *I like something*; and the *zippy* color of the drawing.

A few children (more than kindergarteners) used distinctive words, even when they began to write independently. One wrote about *unusual* events, another about a *one-eyed moon*.

Vocabulary of the second graders was relatively simple. The children mostly used simple action verbs, nouns, and some adjectives. None used adverbs in the writing samples studied. The subject of the entry determined the choice of words, and the subjects were more complex than those of the younger children. Therefore, although the words were common, they indicated more complicated subject matter (for instance, the process of making a drawing entry, the attitudes of characters, or United States history). Words like *color*, and phrases like *The birds were puzzled* and *Revolutionary War* appeared in a number of journal entries. Words like *designed* stemmed from the working vocabulary of the art-centered school. Compared to the younger children, more second graders used these less simple words; but they totaled fewer than half of the sample.

About two-thirds of the third graders used distinctive vocabulary in their journals. These words expressed the same kinds of actions or concepts about which the younger children wrote, but they were more precise in specifying what the actions, feelings, or concepts meant. *Pleasure* replaced the *fun* of the younger children, for example. *Coiled and uncoiled*, *sharpened*, and *night* were in two children's journals. Summary adjectives like *colorful*, *powerful*, *spiral*, and *ancient* appeared in four others. Nouns included *responsibilities* and *octave*.

Although the third graders used more unusual words, their focus seemed to be more on the *whole* of their message rather than on the selection of unusual words. The precise words appeared to come with their concentrating on what it was they were trying to communicate and its meaning. One child who wrote a detailed paragraph for each of her entries included a variety of precise technical words which were not unique *per se*, but rather unique in their presence in a third grader's writing:

This is a man. He is a funny man because he is cross-eyed. And his hair sticks up like a tooth pick. And his nose is bumpy because someone hit him in the nose. And his teeth are made out of rocks and dirt. The end.

Theme, organization, and vocabulary together make up the what--the THOUGHT/MEANING--of the children's writing. While these dimensions also relate to the individ-

uality and form of the writing, the primary impact of these elements communicates the thinking of the child and the meaning the subject has for him or her.

ON PERSON

approach or stance of the writer toward the subject

The approach of the children toward their subjects includes the perspective from which the children view, think about, and write about their subjects. Such perspectives include the anecdotal account, the history, the *story*, or mere *busywork*. The approach was important to all age/grade levels, except the first graders (six- and seven-year-olds) when they were beginning to write independently.

The kindergarten writers had a variety of approaches, from simple statements about what was in their drawings to a detached reflection about an event which had happened some time before.

When they told about events, they viewed the events as a record of a happening, an action narrative, or a simple description. Sometimes the events were real, and other times imaginary. Two children reflected upon real events, such as:

A little girl got a bag of popcorn and she started eating popcorn.

Another child imputed feelings to the character in her imagined event:

She was happy.

Three children (girls) gave the sense of *telling something to an audience.*

Only is cute. Do you like it? Do you know why?

One approached the subject with a sense of *silliness.* Another indicated a moral attitude.

Three children changed their stance through the year. One changed from making a simple statement to the reflection cited above. Another changed from an imaginative stance to a realistic approach to his subject.

First grade writers also had a variety of approaches but included more expository type entries than did the younger children. Five children wrote consistently from the reporting or describing stance, regardless of the subject matter. They described and reported expe-

riences, attitudes, feelings, action, and events respectively.

Several children gave the sense of having an audience (a reader) directly or indirectly.

One child used all of the first graders' approaches, including narration, reporting, describing, explaining, informing, projecting and imagining, and cause/effect. Two examples of relatively unusual perspectives illustrate the apparent flexibility of her stance:

This is a lonely flower. The flower is purple and blue. The city hall isn't saved 'cus super heroes are not here.

Two children evidenced a strong stance toward the journal writing in general. On the one hand, they used the greatest variety of approaches; on the other, they seemed totally involved in a three-fold process of writing: the thinking, expressing, and communicating with the reader. They both operated from an imaginative framework. One expressed feelings and a point of view:

This angel is coming out of a flower. She is surprised because her flower was in the middle of a little girl's garden.

The other explained events, often with a sense of drama:

This is the floor.
No one is standing on it. The people went to lunch.

Only one child showed remarkable growth in this kind of involvement in the writing. From a *This is . . .* approach, she was writing the following kind of entry in the Spring:

An ugly girl walked down the street. She wanted a ride and I am going to give her one

Over half of the second graders developed a new stance during their year of journal writing. Over half of them also continued to assume the storytelling stance:

The most common approach of the second-grade writers was one of imaginative storytelling. This stance took a variety of forms: fantastic creatures doing ordinary activities; ordinary characters engaged in unusual events; or a fanciful or humorous approach to ordinary events in a child's life. The boys' fantasies usually involved fairy tale characters (e.g. a wizard) or space characters or monsters. The girls' fantasies included clowns, animals, or people:

One day a rocket ship blasted off from the earth. He was going to the planet Saturn. While he was on his way, the rocket ship blew up and the space man went flying out. They died.

This is a cat going to a friend's house. She is going to a party.

The second most common approach (one-fourth of the sample) was that of expressing either their own feelings, or those of the people in their journal entries:

I love to do crocheting. I wish I could do it now. My favorite color is pink.

This is a strong man. a design is on his wing. The birds are puzzled.

The story/play format and personal anecdote approach together appeared in as many journals as the expression of feelings. The play/story approach included dialogue and a sense of drama. The personal anecdotes often included a reflective approach to the subject. Three children assumed this *distancing* stance:

I've heard this [nursery rhyme] before. I'm not sure where.

My brother's on the basketball team. He's the tallest.

This is my house on Christmas, and I am not really asleep.

One child appeared to be totally involved in most entries, *getting into* the persons speaking and reflecting on the events. She began to *talk to the audience* less often than when she was younger.

Compared to younger children, fewer third grade writers approached their entries as *stories*. Those who wrote stories approached their *tales* from different perspectives. In fact, the approaches of the third-grade children are more diversified and identifiable than are the younger children's. As they develop in their thinking and increase their experience, they have more to say and more writing skills to put their thoughts into words and then to experiment with their writing in order to help both their thinking on the subject and their communication of it.

Nearly half the third-grade writers used their imaginations to approach their subjects, each in a different manner. Three put themselves into the event, the character, or the setting:

I know a man named pops. He is a clown. I know who he is but I will never tell.

All of a sudden a shark was coming at me. He gulped me down His throat I could not get out and he boiled me up and that was THE END.

I am Thor the son of Oden and I am the Thunder God nobody can beat me with my hammer.

Two other imagined events from the *outside*. These fantasies were largely based on space stories shown on television. Another *forecast* what was going to happen, like a crash of a car. Another *played* with her subjects using humor.

About a third of the children described events in their lives from several perspectives, as follows:

Veri-tech is fun. I like it. Veri-tech is so fun everybody should be doing it.

Two children consistently approached their subjects as a story, one as a *diary*, and the other as a *novel*. The latter presented his story over a three-month period of writing. He approached the story as if it were a drama of five characters who engage in conversation and interact to create the plot.

Another unusual approach was that of a child who approached his subject as the careful observer and thoughtful analyst of events, topics, and animals:

Once upon a time, a rattlesnake coiled. Then he uncoiled. While he coiled and uncoiled he smiled. The end.

One child showed unusual growth from narrating the action of his drawings to stating the qualities of his subjects. Another child, however, continued to forecast what would happen next.

As in other dimensions, the approach to the writing of these third graders was more diversified and complex than that of the younger writers.

Authorship/uniqueness

Authorship is that sense of the individual *style* of the writer which can be identified through various *marks* of the writing. The older children (those in the second and third grades) showed the most growth in *authorship*.

Kindergarten writers showed little recognizable *authorship* or individual style. One can easily identify the authors of various journal entries on the basis of themes of form, however. There are the dinosaur writers, the *pretty girl* writers, and the *This is . . .* writers.

The lack of outstanding style can be explained by the newness of the art of writing to the five- and six-year-olds and by the brevity of their dictated entries. Length of entry, however, is not a major reason for lack of style, inasmuch as many of the older children did communicate a *style* in their entries of similar brevity.

Most first graders showed no real sense of authorship. One girl sometimes had a *chatty* quality through her use of inserted questions or remarks to the reader. One boy invariably wrote in single statements. Another plunged into his topic without the usual *This is . . .*:

I do not like tuna sandwiches in my lunch because they get squished and then I can not eat them.

Another began each entry with *I*: *I went . . . , I love . . . ,* or *I made . . . .*

Authorship first shows among the second-grade writers. The particular feature of the writing which denoted the *style* differed from child-to-child. Three of the six with style had shown some authorship in first grade.

For four second-graders, the sense of authorship came through in the structure of their entries. This pattern seemed to follow a formula; for example, statement plus comment, or statement plus action description, or statement plus action plus value judgment.

For the other two children who had a style, the general approach to the subject denoted authorship. For one, it was her chatty, stream-of-consciousness approach which she had also had in the first grade. For the other, it was the *unexpected* twist of his writing:

This is Godzilla. and a monster is Trying to Kill Him. But Godzilla killed Him first.

The third grade writers had more clear signs of authorship than the younger children had shown. Each *author* created his/her style from a combination of several dimensions of writing. While the marks of style were more evident among the third graders, *authorship* appeared in the same number of children's journals as had appeared in the second grade journals. Of the three second graders who had style, however, only one retained a sense of authorship into the third grade. The other two maintained their way of writing, but that writing did not appear to be significantly identifiable when compared with all other third graders' work. Authorship does not seem to follow an even pattern of development.

One child's work was recognizable because of its dialogue style in his novel--a combination of this person's unique organization, approach, and mechanics.

Another child's writing was recognizable because of the series of details in each entry, a mark of this girl's organization.

Another child was clearly an *author* because of his series of simple and compound sentences about the actions of the subject of his entries, a combination of unique organization, language structure, and approach.

A fourth child's unique style showed in her coherent presentation of information about the subject and her unusual amount of detail. This sense of authorship comes from the dimensions of approach, vocabulary, and organization.

A fifth child spoke as an *author* by using qualifying statements about his subjects. He defined carefully, analyzed each subject, and expressed a point of view throughout the year, a combination of approach, vocabulary, and language structure:

Today I can not think of a story to write! It is hard.
But I did.
The End.

and

These are some views of a airplan [front, back, two sides] I can also make paper airplane.

Authorship seems to develop through the integration of more than one dimension of writing. This combination usually includes dimensions from each of the three major aspects of writing: THOUGHT, PERSON, and FORM.

Authenticity/individuality
of the writing

Authenticity refers to the note of *sincerity* which seems to express the voice of the author as an authority on his subject. Usually, the way an individual's authority comes through the writing is in the directedness of the writing. Authenticity may involve expressions of feeling and opinion, but it also includes the description, analysis, or narration of something which the author has experienced. The reader can sense his/her *voice* speaking. The sense of *voice* grew as the children grew older.

The kindergarten children communicated their individual voices most often through statements about what or whom they liked. Not many of them wrote about themselves as

having any particular traits, although some presented themselves as major characters in their drawings. A few gave a sense of personal involvement in their writing through the use of their senses or a personal phrase in contrast to mere action or description. *I made it*, wrote one. *I smelled it*, said another.

Fewer first graders than kindergarteners expressed authenticity. The few who did, however, communicated their individuality, their feelings, their attitudes, and their experiences in several ways which were more complex than the simple statements of the kindergarten writers.

The directedness by which one presented her views of events and herself communicated a *sincerity*:

L is for Lisa who is six years old. She likes flowers and loves herself.

Another communicated the sense of *someone* through the completeness of his explanations:

This is me and my daddy and we were walking with my little brother and me.

Two girls clearly showed their individual voices when they expressed feelings about experiences in their lives:

I am going home and when I get home, I am going to make a book.

I went to the beach. I did not want to stay home.

Two others, a boy and a girl, emerged as individuals simply by writing about what they did, would do, or thought:

I am reading a book about Bigfoot. It tells about the man like ape that walks in the woods. It is a good book.

I made up an alphabet . . . . It is hard to do it very well, so that's why most people stop at the z, BUT NOT ME!!!

Whereas the authorship of the second grade writers was evident in only a handful of the children, the sense of the individual behind the writing was evident in more than half of the writers. Personal feeling or energy accounted for the authentic voice of most of these. The following excerpts illustrate this note of authenticity:

I'm going to be a monster and scare people and it's going to be fun.

This is space gum if you like it we will give you a lifetime supply.

Three other signs of authenticity included an emphasis on the self as the primary subject, an analysis of the meaning of the event, and a value judgment:

This is me and my Mom. I am helping her to pick flowers. It is my favorite thing to do. This is my favorite dress.

The writer of this last entry seemed to enter personally into the event. Analysis, explanation, and opinion predominated her entries.

The prevalent refocusing on personal feelings among the second-graders may be explained by the fact that this age-level child is writing completely on his/her own without a teacher-audience-writer. During a transition period, feelings and personalization may be the more natural mode of authenticity.

Compared to authorship, the dimension of authenticity is easier to detect in the third-grade writers through their expression of feelings and opinions about the subject to a direct or indirect audience. (During the third grade, the teachers who read the journals were primarily *readers* of the children's writing.)

More of the third-graders expressed viewpoints than did the second-graders. More than half expressed such sincere statements as feelings (*They are mean. very mean. I can't stand them.*), likes and dislikes, opinions, or simple anecdotes or diary-like entries.

The child who communicated an authentic point-of-view the most clearly did so through other dimensions: a unique vocabulary, a highly analytical approach, and the most complex organization in his short entries:

About a index
A index is like a table of contents. Only a table of contents goes like 123 and a index goes alphabetical order.

Together, the strength of the multiple dimensions and the year-long accumulation of journals comprise a clear sense of this boy's voice. The reader is struck by the sense of the person and his thinking behind the writing. His case illustrates the interconnections of authenticity, authorship, and approach to delineate PERSON.

Interrelationships of writing and drawing

The interrelationships of the writing and drawings of the journals comprise a dimension peculiar to this research study. As explained earlier, the inclusion of both modes of expression/communication was based on the assumption that the two modes are complementary symbol systems and complementary functions of the brain. Using both kinds of functions and both kinds of communication, a child has more resources for thinking and expressing than if he/she used the writing mode or the linear way of thinking about his/her world. A value in using both modes is the opportunity afforded the child to seek his/her favorite medium which, in turn, will stimulate the use of the other medium to *round out* the expression.

As the children progressed in the school through the three years of the study, they used the picture mode less often, but no less carefully, and with considerable detail. Meanwhile, the writing gained, particularly in detail, organization, and authorship. While two-thirds of the kindergarteners in the study used the two modes in a complementary fashion, one-half of the older children used them both to communicate an overall idea. These older children used one or the other as the primary mode.

For most of the kindergarteners, the pictures and writing together expressed the *meaning* they were attempting to express. In some cases, the drawings were more detailed or communicated more actively than the writing expressed.

For many, the function of the writing in relation to the picture ranged from pointing out or listing what was in the picture to narrating the event that the picture presented (such as, *Mouse got caught in Zachary's mousetrap.*).

For others, the two modes were complementary. The picture illustrated the story or the writing told the story of which the picture was a part. In several cases, the drawing and writing formed a single graphic communication.

For a number, the writing actually said *This is*, or *There is*, referring to the picture.

Growth occurred in several directions. One child changed from drawing a detailed picture, beginning to write in more detail, and finally drawing only a design

and explaining how she drew it. Another drew more details as the year progressed. Another, beginning with detailed drawing, added more details to his writing.

For half of the first graders, the two modes were complementary, each telling a part of the story:

He kicked the man when he was doing judo.

Lisa heard about Christmas. Judy and Julie wot [won't] *lite* [let] *her.*

This is . . . . began much of the writing.

For a fourth of the first graders, the picture assumed more importance. For another fourth, the writing assumed more importance, telling more of the story than was in the picture, describing the character in the drawing, or describing the setting.

One boy described the totality of a detailed picture in a single sentence:

I'm playing otedan (name of a game)

Growth can be seen in both modes, in their relationship, or in one mode only:

Blue was pulling the string and he got burned. Crazy crone is saving Blue. The only way to save Blue is getting the bad guy.

There were more details in the picture of this complicated event than in her earlier entries.

Most second graders used both drawing and writing together in their daily journal entries. About half seemed to use both modes in a complementary fashion, either by using both to express the totality of their ideas, or by writing their entries with a pictorial effect.

The complementary use of both writing and drawing occurred in different ways. Several wrote and drew on the same page so that the reader caught the total idea at one glance:

This city has a lot of buildings.

One child drew the action and wrote the details. Another drew the character and wrote the attributes of happenings:

This is a Cheetah it runs fast.

The children who took more time and energy to write than to draw expressed actions, events, details, or

explanations of the drawings in their writing:

I can't wait until Christmas. It will be fun. every Christmas is fun.

In many cases, the picture illustrated the writing, but could stand alone. The *novel* written through dialogue, for example, could be read alone. A single entry by another boy had the same effect:

One day Richard came to my house. He tried to take my chocolate pudding.

This is . . . . was the common beginning for each of the children who drew more than wrote. At the same time, it was the beginning for two children, who went on to explain at length the background, details, or meanings of their drawings.

Two children developed in different directions in this dimension. One child who began to write independently wrote less at the end of the year, although he had written more earlier. Even earlier, however, he had covered more of the drawing page with his pictures than the writing side of the journal. The other child wrote more and more detailed entries, while his pictures seemed to become simpler.

About half of the third graders used both writing and drawing in a complementary way, just as the first and second graders had done. The children who used both forms for their journal entries used each mode in a different way to communicate the totality of their meaning. The boy who wrote the novel used details in his pictures for the setting and action and dialogue in his writing to show the progression of the action:

"How many feet underground are we?" "About 23,000 feet." "Gayo." "What, Brian?" "Call station and tell them."

One girl used vocabulary to capture the springlike effect of her picture:

This is me. and the flowers I like the Flowers. The flowers like me.

Another girl wrote about the *fun* quality of her picture's action:

Snow II: I liked it So much Laura Fox was there and Lori Fox too. Robin Goodfellow taught quilling. It looks like this.

One of the boys wrote about several perspectives of the picture:

This man is going to event a snow mobile, and he is going to be famous.

One child had more details in the picture than in the writing, but the writing had a graphic effect which balanced the picture.

A fourth of the children used writing as the principal means of communication. These particular children were third graders during the first year of the school, without the history of drawing and writing together in their journals. They sometimes drew cursory sketches, cut out magazine pictures, or drew frames around their pictures. Often, however, there were only written entries like this one:

today I am Happey I don't know wy But I don't care now I like school

Three children grew in the development of their ideas, one without pictures and two with drawings. The one who stopped drawing regularly expressed more details in his writing:

Here comes the parade. I like parades. I like the alouns on motorcycles. I like the brass bands. I also like the floats. The End.

One of the two who continued to draw pictures developed and regressed in the amount of detail in both:

This is a skateboard and it is old.

The other, who seemed to have *fun* in using both modes, grew in both:

A troup of skunks came to the valy with my dog, he didn't realy want the pleasher of having company.

Language structure

Language structure includes word order, grammar, phrasing, sentence type, and other structural forms, as well as formal literary devices or mass media formats which children absorb from their reading and viewing experiences. In general, simple and compound sentences appeared in the younger children's journals, and complex sentences began to appear in the first grade (six- and seven-year-olds). Rhetorical devices became less important than at first assumed during the research, except for the children who were writing independently during the second and third grades (seven-, eight-, and nine-year-olds).

All but one of the kindergarten writers wrote in full sentences, most of which were simple declarative state-

ments. This ability was undoubtedly encouraged by the journal-writing situation in which they dictated to an audience. Several kindergarteners also formulated compound sentences:

This is a little house and she likes her family and she likes to have her house painted, and flowers.

The language structure depended upon the subject and purpose of the writing. When the children were describing pictures, the form they used was either a *This is . . . .* statement or a participial description of the action, such as *He is going . . . .* Several embedded the *This is . . . .* as the year progressed:

This is a Christmas tree in a box

Godzilla is fighting the giant crab.

The participial construction seemed to be the most distinctive pattern of the kindergarten writers. The participial construction described the picture or the action which was one step removed from the picture. For example:

These kids are playing Indian.

The kindergarten writers changed from the participial construction to the active voice when they began to write about the action involved, the larger setting, or the overall (general) concept of which the picture was a part:

She got kicked out of school because she was talking back to her teacher.

Others embedded the participial phrase within a sentence:

This is a girl smelling the flowers.

Kindergarteners used both present and past tenses, depending upon their subject and purpose. When they were describing their drawings, they usually used the present tense. When they were describing the action in a picture or the total action of which a drawing was a part, they used the past tense. Many entries included both kinds of statements, one describing the drawing, the second describing what was taking place when the picture captured the action:

The two girls were playing in the sun. One girl jumped to the sun.

One child embedded the participial *idea* as an adjective. Another employed a prepositional phrase rather than a

second sentence. Several asked questions and made exclamatory statements.

Kindergarteners do not use many rhetorical devices, such as *Once upon a time*, or *The end*, adapted from internalized storytelling. Since most kindergarten children are not yet independent writers, they do not see themselves as *authors* who create beginnings and endings of writings. Four used these devices, conversation, and *That's all* (a kind of ending device).

All first graders wrote in full sentences, usually declarative statements. Some connected their sentences with a series of *and's*. One used a *but* to keep the story going. Several used adverbial clauses, one used a prepositional phrase, and one an infinitive.

Contrasted with kindergarten writers, several composed more concise sentences embedding participles, such as *the ugly girl*, rather than the common pattern of the younger children, *This is a girl. She is ugly.*

Most first graders used present, past, and future tenses appropriately.

One girl experimented with rhyme (labeled a *poem*), although she wrote the lines in the regular essay form without regard to the rhyming ends of lines.

Few first graders employed rhetorical devices. Only two used *The End*, and only one of them used the device to any extent (along with a title). One child included *ago* in his first sentence, and another began several entries with *One day*.

Most second graders wrote complete simple or compound sentences. A half were occasionally writing complex sentences by March.

A number continued to use the participial construction in reference to the subject of the drawing, like *I am helping . . . .* At the same time, a number embedded their *This is* structure, such as when one girl described the *butterfly flying through the air.*

Two second graders showed considerable variety in sentence structure. Only two children had grammatical errors, one of person, and one of verb form.

One of these children was still dictating, indicating that the error was part of his speaking structure.

One child who was dictating single sentences in the active voice reverted to the participial form when he began to write independently. He then simply labeled his

drawing and wrote a short sentence. Another child, however, maintained his one- or two-sentence construction after he began to write by himself.

Few second graders used rhetorical devices. Three used *The end*, one used repetition for effect, and one experimented with onomatopeia, rhyme, and internal capitalization for effect.

Over half of the third grade writers wrote in a combination of simple, compound, and complex sentences.

Three children wrote only in compound sentences. Two of them (girls) wrote series of sentences all joined by *and*. The third, a boy, began the year writing one compound sentence per entry, and by the end of the year wrote two single sentences.

At the same time, two children used both simple and compound sentences, and two others wrote in compound sentences at the end of the year after having begun the year writing two single sentences. In the case of the boy and the four cited here, they all had developed a way to communicate more complex thought. The boy had two major things to say rather than two parts of one idea. The four who changed to compound and simple sentences also had more to say, but they were at a different level of development. Their change was toward more coherence, such as:

Brian is trying to get a fly and eat it. The fly is going to make him sick.

or more connectedness, such as:

I helped make a castle and Paint it. It was fun and we're going to finish it today.

Only one child continued to use the participial construction related to the picture rather than to the meaning of the journal entry.

More third grade writers used rhetorical devices than did children at the younger age/grade levels. Over half of the children used *The end*, signaling the completion of their entries, regardless of form (story, diary, or description).

Dialogue, variations of *Once upon a time*, title, and *By* ---- appeared next most often in the journal entries. The most elaborate of these signals of authorship was one boy's *novel*:

Journey to the Center of the Earth
author____, illustrator____, starring [his friends]

Two boys adopted the television commercial format. For example:

. . . *and now we bring you* . . .

The media and literary forms were devices absorbed by the young writers as readers, listeners, and viewers. Titles and the dialogue format could have been taught.

Mechanics

The mechanics of the journal writing include aspects of the physical act of writing and applied knowledge of letter formation, upper and lower case letters, spelling, and punctuation.

For the younger children, manual control was the most important mechanical *problem*, especially when the first graders (six- and seven-year-olds) began to copy the teachers' writing and started to write independently. Once the children began to write independently (in first through second grade), the mechanics dimension was seen mainly in their use of capitals and lower case letters for the beginnings of words, regardless of sentences. While the *sentence sense* was evident, appropriate punctuation and capitalization were not.

Since all but one kindergartener dictated entries throughout the year, there were few mechanical problems beyond manual control of the pencil in following the teachers' letters when tracing, or eye-hand coordination in order to stay on the line in order to copy the teachers' writing.

About half of the kindergarten children began to underwrite (copy the teachers' writing of their dictated entries) by the end of the year. One made the transition in December, several in the Spring, and several in June. Several others tried once in February, but returned to overwriting (tracing). One child began independent writing in April and another tried once in February.

The one child who wrote independently made two mechanical errors in a three-sentence story: a spelling error (*spiting* for *medfing*) and use of capitals within a sentence.

As first graders began to write independently, some had trouble spelling as well as using lower case letters within sentences. Since most entries were short, the only mechanics involved were those of capitalizing the first word of a sentence and placing a period at the end.

One first grader was able to write on his own when he began the year. Most of the others were writing inde-

pendently by Spring. Others tried to write on their own occasionally or kept underwriting consistently.

Punctuation (primarily periods) was perfect. The few spelling errors were mainly of the inventive kind, based on a phonetic approach (*howse* for *house*, *modle* for *model*), or letter omissions (*wet* instead of *went*).

Several first graders showed poor manual control in their lack of uniform letter size or their inability to *stay on the line*.

Half of the second graders began the year writing alone, and the remainder were writing independently by January. The most prevalent mechanical difficulty for all the children was punctuating and capitalizing sentences. This *error* was not one of *sentence sense*, since, if read aloud, the writing clearly indicated to the reader that *here is a sentence*.

Five of the children (a third of the sample of second graders) were capitalizing the first word of their sentences by May. Of the five who, at the beginning of the year, omitted periods at the end of their sentences, three were adding them by June.

Spelling was usually correct for all but three children. When incorrect, the spelling was phonetic, and, if read aloud, understandable (*herd* for *heard*, *wich* for *which*, *strang* for *strange*, *cad* for *could*). Often the spelling was not precisely phonetic (for example, *eckested* for *excited*).

Only one sentence fragment and one comma splice appeared, the one truly a sentence error, the other a punctuation mistake. Similarly, a few manual control problems appeared when several children made their writing smaller.

All the third graders wrote independently from the beginning of the year. Some tried overwriting and underwriting of cursive writing during the year.

One third grade writer had perfect manual control and mechanics. All the others had one or more errors in three major categories of mechanics: mixing upper and lower case letters within sentences; not using capital letters and periods to mark sentences; and misspelling words (usually phonetically).

While most of the third graders wrote in complete sentences most of the time, two-thirds of them did not always indicate sentences by use of the proper mechanics. Some also placed periods *within* sentences, as if trying to put periods in to show sentences, regardless of

the sentences. By the end of the year, a second child in the sample was punctuating sentences perfectly.

About a third of the sample capitalized words mid-sentence, a confusion of upper and lower case letters and a lack of understanding of the function of capitals more than a lack of sentence sense.

A third also had spelling errors, mostly due to phonetic rather than misremembered spelling; but there were also a few errors due to omissions and reversals of letters.

Almost half of the group had problems with manual control of their writing, which prevented them from achieving uniform size and appropriate spacing of the words on the page. By the year's end, however, all but three had mastered this dimension.

From the reader's perspective, the three dimensions of FORM viewed together made as much of a gain over the four year period as did the three-fold dimensions of THOUGHT and PERSON. As a human *leap*, the mastery of graphic and written symbolization of thought and individuality represents a considerable feat for the children to have accomplished.

3

The Teacher as Responsive Reader

Both the research and the simultaneous classroom practice brought out the importance of the role-shift which a teacher assumes when viewing the journals through the use of the dimensions. By looking at the what, who, and how of the writing, the teacher has to give her attention to the meaning, the ideas, the vocabulary, the organization, the individuality, the sentence structure, and the authenticity of each student's work. Acting as a reader, rather than as a critic, the teacher responds to the content or form, the feelings expressed, and the ideas and opinions presented. In order to motivate the student to extend the nugget of the entry, the teacher reacts to the substance of the writing, suggesting and enquiring.

These responsive comments motivate the students, in turn, to write with greater clarity and to include specific examples, varied vocabulary, and complex sentence structure. The children gradually achieve overall coherence, unity, and emphasis as a means to communicate more effectively *their* message.

Through the daily writing practice afforded by journal writing and editing, the teacher's constructive guidance, and the specific skill-directed instruction in areas which the journal writing shows to be under-developed, specific skills of writing such as spelling, punctuation, grammatical syntax, paragraph construction, and theme development grow naturally.

Especially at the secondary level, the teacher's role *vis-a-vis* journal writing is distinctly different from the role traditionally given to the English or writing teacher. Rather than the red-pencil approach to errors, the teacher reads journals with the express purpose of finding out what the individual students have to say, what their interests or feelings are, and what forms and structures they chose to use to communicate their thoughts and person. In this mode, the teacher does not grade or score the student's work but rather responds to the content and points out problem areas which hinder communication.

The very process of writing regularly in the journals has a self-generating power. Without the teacher's acting as a guide through responsive reading, however, the growth of the students' writing skills will be *stunted* just as a flower garden suffers from lack of a gardener's hoe and trowel. In this case, the student writer is the gardener and the teacher is the instructor of how to sow, weed, transplant, water, prune, cut, and thin.

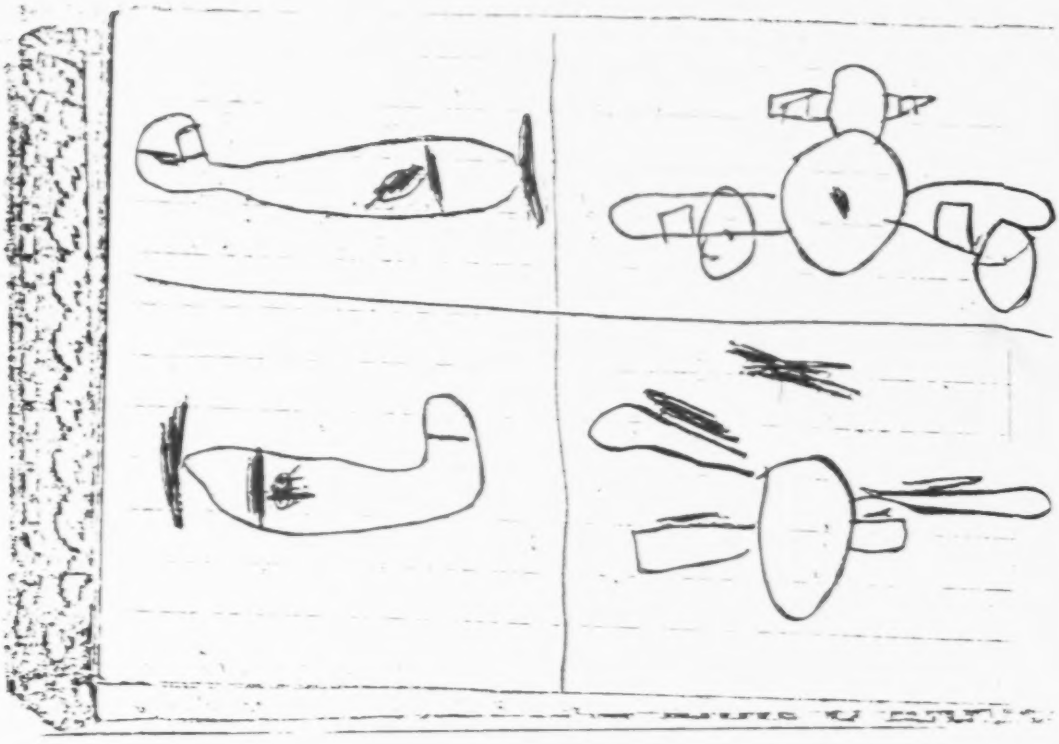
USE OF THE DIMENSIONS

The dimensions are not a means for scoring, grading, or *checking off* competencies. One simply reads a student's journal (or any writing) with the nine dimensions in mind. Then, when one notes a distinctive aspect of writing, that aspect can be identified as belonging within a particular dimension. Among the young writers, "Once upon a time" and "The end" will fall under *Language Structure* because that cluster of characteristics includes "rhetorical devices" or "internalized storytelling." A remark like, "I hate my cousin," will go under *Authenticity*--the direct expression of feeling. "I had a hard time thinking of something to write until I remembered last night's experience" would go under *Organization* in terms of "time framework" and also under *Approach* in terms of "the writer's view of the subject."

As the instances of a student's writing coalesce around certain dimensions, the teacher can begin to describe the student's writing. Using the examples above, the first child's writing could be described as "rhetorical," the second as "authentic" and the third as "analytical and reflective." These descriptions, supported by the documentation of the samples of children's writing, can communicate to others--such as parents, principals, or the general public--the real significance and value of the students' writing.

Having accumulated the journal-writing of one student over one year's period, the teacher can trace the development of the writing according to the outstanding characteristics which the teacher noted over the year. The teacher's notations will document the changes and consistencies of the students' writing. Themes, approaches, and structure often change during the year. At the same time, whatever features an individual writer consistently shows will also embrace all three major clusters: THOUGHT, PERSON, and FORM.

The following is a selection of the journal entries of a third-grade boy, along with a recording form upon which teachers have commented on the entries. (Space is left for the reader to add comments).



These are some views of a airplan. I can also make paper airplane.

This is someone going down The mountain

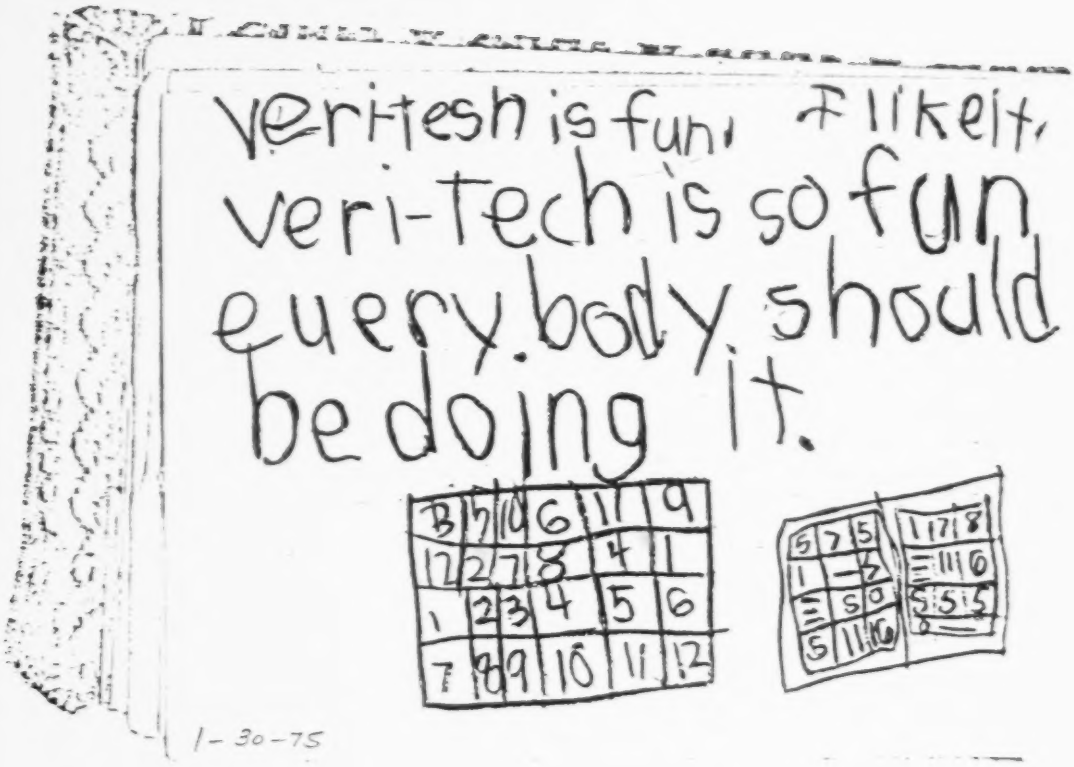
11-28-74

41

Thes are
some zebra
wachers. They

are going to ther are.
find out how
manly stipes

12-2-24


veritesh is fun. I like it.
veri-tech is so fun
euery body should
be doing it.
1-30-75

["veritech"]

Youcan make a
office building a
Hotel and a
church. There is

2-3-75

a restront to
make. At lest I
think so.
The End

2-4-75

Here cumes The parade. I like parades. I like the downs on motorcydes. I like the brass bands I also like The floats.

The End

I like parades, too!

3-18-75

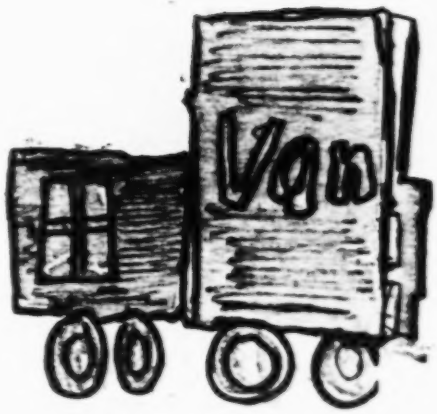
45

I have a
playschool village.
It is fun you can
make beautiful
buildings. It has
a fire house and
a railroad station
You make houses

1-31-75

This is a little girl. She is going to move today.

Here comes
The moving
van. It
will take
the

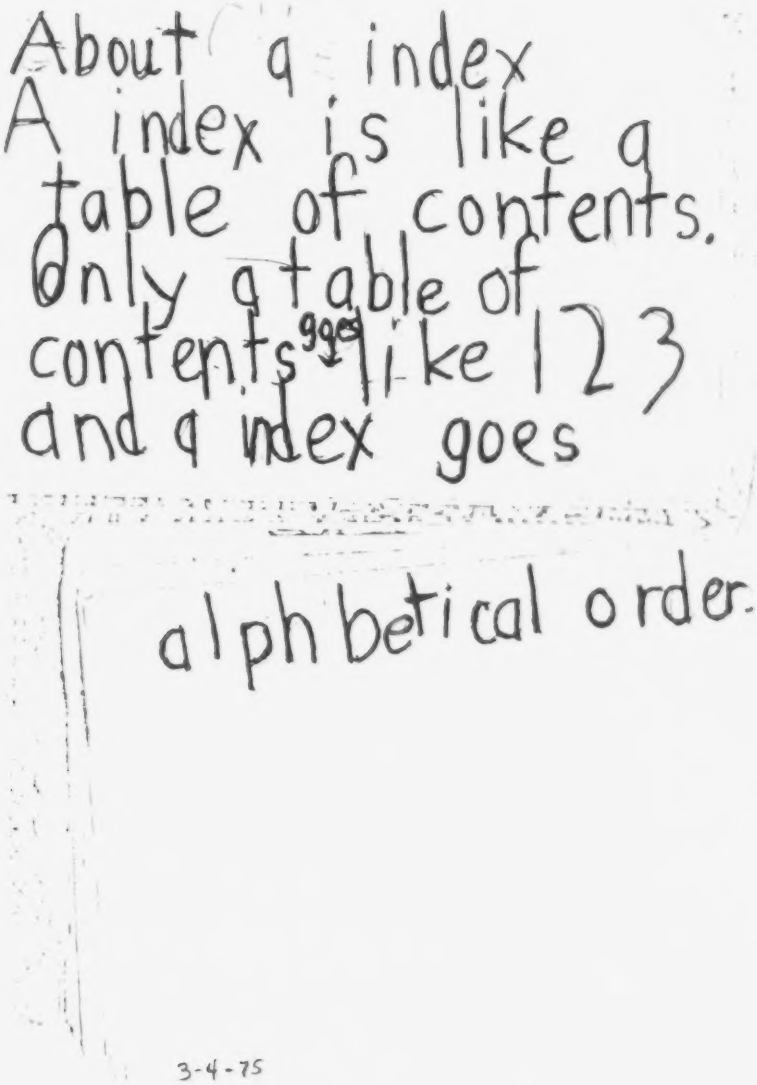


furniture to her
new home.
here comes
the chair and

6-3-75

The table on
themoving van.
and she is watching
it isfun.

49


About a index
A index is like a
table of contents.
Only a table of
contents goes like 123
and a index goes
alphbetical order.
3-4-75

WORKSHEET FOR YEAR'S ANALYSIS

#

Date

Reader

1. Themes animal, observation, many sides of things (knit, airplane, ..."but")

2. Organization -

3. Vocabulary - precise scientific observation - "coiled and uncoiled"

4. Approach/stance observer - snake, parade
analytical, self-aware "At least I think so"

5. Authorship/Uniqueness ..

"At least I think..."
" I like..."
"I can draw"

6. Authenticity/Individuality positive like parade fun to make models

7. Interrelationships of writing & drawing - not many drawings
as drew more, writing became less complicated.

8. Language structure compound and complex sentences

9. Mechanics controlled to bigger, less even through year

Notes:

Using just these samples, a teacher could provide anyone with a description of the writing by summarizing the major characteristics: unusual vocabulary, consistent interest in details, analytical approach to subjects, sense of responsibility, complex sentences, and balance of thought. "He is confident and not afraid to speak up," said a teacher reading these samples, a teacher who did not know the child. It was an apt description, the child's teacher reported later.

By keeping a student's writing samples over several years and looking at them through the dimensions, teachers can identify and depict a dramatic picture of writing development. After analyzing the samples of a child's work from kindergarten through second grade, the research team was able to write the following summary of his language development:

WHAT. The connections between illustrations and writing remained consistent through the three years, but growth was noticeable in his going beyond the pictures in his writing during his second grade entries. Thinking skills appeared to expand as he began to intimate feelings, imply previous actions, add unillustrated details and graphic details within his stories, show the cause and effect of his subject, and involve himself in the actions of his writing.

WHO. His approach moved from simple recording of events to personal and imaginative experiences written with feelings and dramatic action which became more specific. His fantasy writing became less television-oriented and more personalized, with imaginative twists to his stories.

HOW. He replaced simple sentences with more complex and varied sentence structures, including participles (not as passive verbs) and adverbial clauses. He began to entitle stories in the second grade and moved rapidly from overwriting to underwriting to independent writing. His spelling was perfect and his punctuation adequate as he wrote independently during his second grade.

Those on the research team who were teachers of the student confirmed that these generalizations from the samples of the student's writing were appropriate. In other words, a sampling of a child's writing can demonstrate the child's language development as well as the day-to-day study of the writing.

4

Significance of the Use of the Dimensions

Three aspects of this way of looking at writing appear equally as important as the picture of language development which the research revealed:

First, the three-fold look at language development drew attention to the thinking and the individuality of the students as well as to the form of their writing. Thinking and individuality are often overlooked by teachers despite the fact that they are a major part of the substance of written communication.

Second, the inclusion of non-verbal with verbal symbols in the journal research added to the study an important data source from which to interpret what the students were attempting to express or communicate. Each mode enhanced the other to present a total meaning.

Third, the developmental approach afforded a framework through which the significance of the data could be revealed. What seemed to be a detail in initial entries could through recurrence be seen as an identifying characteristic of a group of students or individual writers.

An unexpected and important extension of this approach has been the use of the dimensions in the classrooms of the teachers involved in the research and those of other teachers with whom the research findings and process were shared. The teachers who have used the dimensions with their journal writing have said, for example, that their focusing on the nine aspects of writing has helped them to communicate to parents what their children have accomplished, particularly in the areas of writing style, form, and content. The teachers indicate also that the dimensions have helped them to identify the children's individual *themes* and that this identification has helped them to guide the children toward engaging in activities which can reinforce the children's skill and/or interests.

All of the teachers who have used the dimensions and assessment method have reported that this approach has helped them to concentrate on the *whole child* as reflected in the child's writing and drawing. The *focus*,

in turn, has made the teachers become a real *audience* for their students. The students seem to be motivated to sharpen their writing and thinking skills in order to communicate their ideas and individuality to a responsive reader.

PRACTICAL USE

A third grade teacher who began journal writing in January reported in May that:

By having made books for each child, the boys and girls had a sense of ownership that would not have been true if they had just been given a sheet of paper and asked to write a story.

Secondly, several students who previously grumbled when asked to write and wrote next to nothing began to look forward to Wednesdays and journal writing time. They were eager to share what they had written and to show their illustrations.

I found that teaching the mechanics of writing was easier. Also, many students learned how to find the spelling of words in the dictionary by using our spelling dictionaries which are a part of the classroom's reference section. Having a reason for needing this skill was an incentive for learning.

Another teacher of a mixed class, grades three to six, found similar success:

The decision to try journal writing with my students has proven to be an excellent one. I was concerned that perhaps my students, since they have been identified as having Learning Disabilities, would not be helped by such a project. We had previously done Creative Writing but only as time allowed and not a regular consistent basis.

In introducing this activity to my classes, I told them to feel free to write about anything. No one would be reading the journals except me unless they gave permission. The younger students (third and fourth graders) wanted to draw pictures and then write about the picture. The older students (fifth and sixth graders) preferred to write without any drawing.

A few students have proven to be resistant to doing any writing at all. In an attempt to overcome their reluctance, I told them to use their journal as a diary. In most cases it has worked but one student still refused to write anything. Peer pressure finally got him to make an attempt and he writes a few lines now.
Some of my parents, after seeing the journals and hearing my explanation of why writing skills are so impor-

tant, have started family projects to improve the student's writing ability. One family has made the student the family secretary. He has to write out all family correspondence, some from dictation. Another family has made it a family project to cut down on the phone bill by reducing long distance calls and writing letters and notes instead.

By the end of the school year I expect to be able to see some amount of progress made by each of my students. For some of them the progress is already evident. They are enthusiastic about the journal writing. Since we only do it once a week, they make sure I don't forget and they let me know each week that Tuesday is the time for journal-writing.

For 11th- and 12th grade students, too, journal-writing played a predominant role. Teachers found that the journal process made it possible for students of a wide range of ability levels to perform successfully. Through the practice of daily writing, each student--no matter how deficient his or her writing skills were in September--was able to write in complete sentences and paragraphs and to compose complete *essays* by June. The teachers' responses to the students' concerns, which were expressed in the journals (private at this age), demonstrated to the students the teachers' interests in the students as individuals--an important factor for motivating most secondary students.

SIGNIFICANCE OF JOURNAL-WRITING FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The ongoing nature of journal-writing is a significant factor in the development of students' writing skills. Because the students are *continually* writing and honing their writing skills at their own developmental and personal levels, the teachers' assessment of thought/meaning, author/person, and form/structures brings about striking results in the teaching and learning of writing. First, teachers are able to perceive more aspects in the students' writing and therefore can break down *blocks* and stimulate further development of specific aspects of writing. Second, the students become more aware of the meaning, individuality, and structural components of their own writing as the teachers bring their attention to these components by their written or oral comments. This two-fold effect--the teachers' heightened awareness and guidance and the students' increased awareness and control of the writing process and and content--is constantly reinforced as the students *keep on* writing and learning to write and as the teachers *continue* to look for and respond to the what, the who, and the how of each student's composition.

5

Postscript: Practical Matters

Journal-writing can take place in many ways. At the elementary level, the teacher usually has the students write in their journals during an assigned time, such as the language arts period, or a student-chosen time in an informal classroom situation or within an integrated curriculum. At the secondary level, the English teacher (or any other teacher) can assign nightly writing or daily/weekly classroom journal-writing.

In the early grades. In primary grades, writing is a natural way for children to express their ideas and feelings. Many primary teachers start journal-writing by first explaining and showing what a journal is and how and why a person keeps a journal. Teachers often have the class *brainstorm* the possible journal topics on the chalkboard and leaves them there for several days as a list to motivate and generate the children's wanting to express their thoughts and views. The list also serves as a reminder about possible topics upon which to write.

In the beginning, a student-teacher, an aide, an upper-grade student, or a parent volunteer can be helpful adjunct staff for helping with spelling or listening to entries being read aloud. For the kindergarteners, someone must be available to take down the entries in the children's own words. This is done every other line of the journal pages to allow for the children to copy the words on the line below. Later, the writing of dictated entries can be done in the normal fashion because the children will be tracing the writing (overwriting).

In the intermediate grades. Writing will still be natural in these grades, but the issue of privacy becomes paramount. Journals may have to be kept in the teacher's desk, a circumstance that will reduce the spontaneity afforded by having the journal in one's own desk.

For older students, the possibility of *blocks to writing* is a not unlikely expectation in contrast to the younger children's unfettered urge to write. Blocks which stem from fears of failure or lack of experience

can be broken down by specific writing exercises and the teacher's repeated positive (and private) responses. Sentence starters, theme ideas, magazine pictures, current events, class experiences, or *model* passages of literature can help to stimulate each student's natural impulse to say something about what is meaningful or interesting to him.

After responding to artificial *starters*, the reluctant writers usually respond to the self-generating power of simply writing down what they feel or think of daily experiences. This is the age, too, when fantasy and idealism can motivate the writing of long journal entries about unreal places and people. Many stories and novelettes appear among the journals of nine-to-12-year-olds.

In the secondary grades. More often than among the elementary students, blocks to writing and to any exposure of personal feelings appear in the initial journal writing. Provocative slogans or sayings, magazine pictures, television plots, and current events make effective starting points. Eventually the diary-like aspect of journals and the privacy guaranteed by the teacher motivate many of the students to write freely and regularly about the vicissitudes of adolescent life. The teacher's continued interest in each individual's writing encourage this kind of writing.

Once writing becomes a habit. No matter what age/grade, students gradually fall into the pattern of writing, particularly when the journal-writing is an *expected* part of the curriculum and kept free of scoring or evaluating. As they continue to write in their journals, whether it is once a day or once a week, students become personally involved in the process. They look forward to it and some *sneak it in* during free moments. As their writing becomes a habit, the knowledge that their teacher will read and respond personally to their writing seems to motivate the students to try to compose their ideas and feelings with increasing clarity.

The daily journal format provides a vehicle for personal expression and the *sorting out* of one's ideas on paper. The teacher's continued interest in what the students think encourages this kind of *thinking on paper*. In turn, the teacher's knowledge of the students' interests and thoughts helps the teacher to develop curriculum and classroom ideas which will be meaningful to the students, thereby giving them more subject matter about which to think and write. Especially at the secondary level, this promoting of interest and motivation is extremely important for developing competent writers.

How to manage. Assessing students' journal-writing takes less time than *correcting* the entries. Daily reading of the younger students' writing takes about an hour. The teacher puts a check mark on the entry, dates it, and occasionally writes a comment in response to what the student expressed. The check mark alone shows that the teacher cared enough to read the entry. This caring motivates the student to write more.

Reading the older students' work, which is usually a longer composition and written less frequently than the younger students' work, takes longer. Teachers of these older writers may wish to read the journals only once a week. A check mark and date, and comments about distinctive features, are all that are necessary for the teacher to write. Given the usual five-class schedule of secondary teachers, a rotating reading schedule of the five classes over the five days of the week can keep the reading to less than two hours per class per week.

In reading the journals, the teacher will, of course, note the errors which interfere with clear communication. The teacher, however, does not mark the errors but rather writes what is needed to be done on the bottom of the page. Words correctly spelled, the correction needed (full sentence, introductory clause, for example), or a question about the lack of clarity or coherence are the kinds of comments teachers write in the journals as a way to make the students look at their writing more critically and do their own proofreading and editing.

In addition, the teacher will want to conduct directed instruction of the deficient areas of writing which the journal work has revealed. When a certain *fault* has been noted in several journals in the class, for instance comma splicing, the teacher can gather the comma splicers together and give them specific practice tasks designed to perfect their sentence sense. When the entire class seems to be having trouble constructing paragraphs in their journals, that is the time for the teacher to have everyone work on topic sentences and practice using them in their later journal-writing on topics in which they are personally interested.

The housekeeping of journals varies between the younger and older writers. When journal-writing takes place during the school day in primary grades, the journals can be kept in alphabetically arranged folders for easy location by the writer for writing time or shared reading. At the intermediate and secondary levels, when writing may not be a daily assignment and may sometimes be homework, the journals more often remain in the students' desks to be shared only with the teacher.

While the management of journal-writing may take several weeks to seem easy and the time needed for reading may seem more than *normal*, the gain in the teacher's knowledge of the students' interests and feelings and the growth in the students' writing competency make up for the extra time. Compared with *correcting* papers, moreover, responsive reading of the writing is itself rewarding.

A cautionary note. The language development which results from journal-writing is not instantaneous. As a developmental process and a practical skill, writing proceeds gradually. The sampling process helps to assess this slow growth. The daily writing helps to accelerate the skill development. Looking at the meaning, individuality, and form of the writing helps guide the writing toward the general goals of unity, coherence, and emphasis. It is a slow, sure process.

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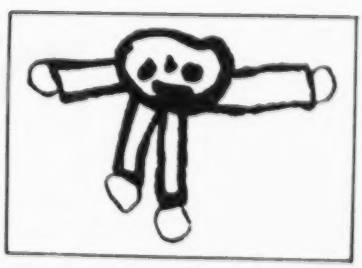

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